

**Press Release**  
**For Immediate Distribution**  
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***Recorder Implements A Plan To Protect Safety  
Force Employees Residential Addresses From  
Internet Index of Records***

**Outlines Program to Lake County Police and  
Fire Chiefs' Associations**

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When House Bill 141 became effective last month, the legislation expended the list of occupations for which residential information is no longer a matter of public record. This legislation directly impacted on line index information that is available on Lake County Recorder Frank Suponcic's county website.

As an elected official that has championed increased awareness on the issue of identity theft, and a CPA that is also employed in the field of fraud and embezzlement investigations, and a long time member of the Lake County Blue Coats, Frank fully understands the importance of minimizing the public information made available on the Internet.

Earlier this year, and addressing a private request from members of the Lake County enforcement community, Suponcic circulated forms to area police departments that were designed to served as the vehicle for them to notify Suponcic to remove their residential address from the County Recorder's on line Internet index. Some chose to take advantage of the pilot program and their residential addresses have since been removed from the online Internet index.

The Ohio Revised Code does not require that public records be available for inspection on the Internet. As a result, public officials have the ability to mask or redact any information reflected on the Internet. Suponcic's web site contains such a disclaimer advising visitors that the website is for information purposes only and may not be complete. Viewers are instructed to refer to the County Recorders actual document index available to the public during 8am – 4pm daily.

With the assistance of Lake County Prosecutor Chuck Coulson's office, Suponcic expanded the program and has begun redacting additional information that has been traditionally available on the Lake County Recorder's website.

By law, a County Recorder cannot lawfully redact any residential information reflected on an actual document that has been filed. Everyone should be aware that under Ohio's public records law any citizen has the right to visit this office to not only view, but if they so choose, to obtain a copy of any publicly filed documents such as a deed or mortgage. This new program *attempts to minimize those in protected occupations residential information that could be available on the Lake County Recorder's on line index of recorded information.*

Enclosed please find a copy of the “Record Confidentiality Request” form that was distributed to the police and fire chiefs associations and is available in the lobby of the Lake County Recorder. Suponcic encourages that such forms should be completed by members of the safety forces who reside in Lake County. The form should be fully completed by each individual wanting their residential address removed from the Lake County Recorder’s online index for 2008. The form must also be completed and returned to him on an annual basis for the on line redaction to remain effective. If anyone’s information has already been redacted he would request that they complete this form for our files for 2008.

It is the individual’s responsibility to notify the Lake County Recorder if their employment changes and as a result they no longer fall into any of the protected categories.

Suponcic has held steadfast to his early decision to not to place images of recorded documents on the Internet. While some county recorders in Ohio have chosen to place their taxpayer document images on line it has always been Suponcic’s belief that the potential risk and harm to taxpayers as a result of placing document images on line – and making them available to the world - far outweighs any benefits from the lawful users.

“Elected officials at times seem to fail to put themselves in the shoes of those that have a valid reason to protect their residential address from the public. Fortunately, HB 141 passing now enables me to assist them a little bit more in trying to protect such personal information. As we have witnessed here in Lake County earlier this year, there have been occurrences where people have sought bodily harm and revenge against those that wear a badge and enforce the laws and administer justice in our society.”

“This is just another example of doing something differently, and doing things better, all in an effort to provide a valuable service to those that serve in such sensitive occupations as law enforcement and firefighting.”

Notifying all members in the protected occupations is a daunting task. Suponcic's first steps were to take the program to the Police and Fire Chiefs Associations in Lake County so that they may so inform their members.

"Employees in the law enforcement and fire fighting communities talk to other fraternal organizations all the time. Word of this program has to spread. What about a Cleveland police officer or firefighter that resides in Lake County? Word has to spread to everyone residing in Lake County that if you are in a protected occupation regardless of where you are employed, the Lake County Recorder wants to help you out and remove your residential address from our online Internet index. The only problem is that we need to know who you are."

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